

MUSIC

in the 19th Century.

It is about time the public demurred to the high prices which popular singers and grasping agents have of late been exacting; and in promoting and sustaining which the press has lent its efficient aid. Since the Jenny Lind furor, which was created through the exceedingly adroit management of that prince of all managers, Barnum, a similar excitement has been attempted with each succeeding star, and, in some cases, not without a good measure of success. That the public have submitted to the thing so long, is a little remarkable. Why must a popular singer claim a thousand dollars a night for singing four or five pieces, when a hundred would be a most liberal compensation? The thing is preposterous! When amusements and recreations are taxed in this way, they become burdensome—are evil rather than good. A man with his wife and two or three daughters, if he would hear Sontag or Alboni, must pay as much for good seats in the concert-room, during a single evening, as would provision his family for a week, or buy fuel enough to keep some poor widow's humble abode warm for a whole winter.

The thing is entirely wrong, and we hope right-thinking and sensible people will give it a little reflection. In all conscience, a dollar for a single admission to any concert is enough. From fourteen hundred to two thousand dollars in the house ought to compensate every one concerned, liberally, and leave a wide margin for the *prima donna*. Beyond this, whatever is paid is, in all probability, so much lost to justice and benevolence. The man who expends from five to twenty dollars on a single concert, will be apt to consider himself a little poor for a week afterwards; and feel, "in justice to his family," pledged to close dealing with the market-woman and day-laborer, and be utterly insensible to all appeals to a generous humanity. Those who are perfectly able to pay these high prices, do not make up the bulk of the large audiences that sit for weary hours in close and crowded concert-rooms, until all sense of enjoyment is blunted; the larger number, either from a passion for music, that will seek gratification at any cost, or from a weak devotion to the mere popular and fashionable, attend by a sort of constraint, but cannot really afford these exorbitant charges.

At one of the concerts of Madame Sontag, in this city, the agents of the lady had the hardihood, if we may so speak, to advertise a limited number of "standee" tickets at one dollar each! We were pleased to observe that few, if any, accepted the insulting offer.

There is one effectual way of reaching the evil of which we complain, and that is, for the leading concert-goers to refuse to attend any concert, no matter by whom given, when the price is fixed at more than one dollar. At that price, with well-filled houses, the "artists" will receive a most liberal return. Thin off the benches for a few nights, and silence the "cymbal and gong of American enthusiasm," and the most exacting foreign singers will come eagerly to terms with

the public. If they can't get three dollars a night, for a few songs, they will warble quite as sweetly for one, and think themselves well paid.

There is no reason or justice in throwing from fifty to two or three hundred thousand dollars into the lap of a public singer in the space of twelve months, when, for a fortune like that, she ought to sing for the public during ten or twenty years. It is downright extravagance! Why should three dollars be paid for a single musical entertainment, when the same money would procure three equally as good, and the singers receive ample remuneration? The public is exceedingly short-sighted in this matter.

Those who can afford to buy tickets at high prices, should remember that there are thousands, equally lovers of music, who cannot; and that, in encouraging the exorbitant demands of singers, they are unjust to the many who are denied the pleasure they are able to enjoy.

Madame Sontag arrived in New York on Sunday, 5th inst., in the steamer Arctic. Sontag, or the Countess Rossi, stands unrivalled as a singer, in the exquisite taste and originality of her style. She closed her dramatic career in 1830, but her husband having lost his property in the revolution of 1848, she returned to the public practice of her art (in concerts only) to retrieve his pecuniary disasters. All who have heard her in Europe, agree, that little or no change in her brilliant vocalization has taken place since her retirement from the position of a public singer, more than twenty years ago. Lowell Mason, who heard her in Berlin, speaks of her singing in terms of unqualified praise. She comes to us, a fit successor to Jenny Lind, though she cannot rob the fair Swede of a single laurel. Both are pre-eminent—competers, not rivals. They are the queens of song. As a woman, Madame Sontag stands before the world without a blemish. In all domestic virtues, her fame is spotless.

It is stated in the Musical World, that Messrs. Hall & Son, of New York, pay to William Vincent Wallace, the sum of one hundred dollars for every original composition or arrangement he furnishes them, of whatever kind or length;—even if it be only a two-page polka, the sum is paid. At this high rate, the Messrs. Hall have a contract for ten years, and if Mr. Wallace is as prolific in the future as he has been in the past, he will receive in that time, it is estimated, over one hundred thousand dollars. For this contract, the publishers have refused fifty thousand dollars. From his London and Paris publishers, Mr. Wallace receives, it is stated, more than twice as much as he gets from Messrs. Hall & Son—in all about six hundred dollars for each composition. This is adding up figures pretty rapidly; and it may be all so; but it is not strange if there should arise in the mind a doubt as to the accuracy of some of the figures given.

MANAGING THE PUBLIC.

The success of a prominent singer, or theatrical star, has come to depend materially on the adroitness of the "Manager," whose duty it is to see after that rather capacious and uncertain individual, the Public. His first act, if he understand the business, is to get on the sunny side of certain influential editors in New York, who, for a consideration—of what nature we do not pretend to say—will sing to any tune the leader may desire; and his second act is to secure the same advantageous relationship to one or more telegraphic reporters for the press in other cities, who will make the wires, if necessary, say that black is white. If these arrangements are securely made, and the manager has the requisite skill to work his machinery, he may calculate, with little chance of disappointment, on doing with the public pretty much as he pleases.

The tricks of managers are various, and the amount of genius displayed is sometimes remarkable. Occasionally, the hand is seen in some bungling passes; but, for the most part, the obedient public remains self-complacently ignorant of the game that is so successfully played against them.

Sometimes, as in the instance we are about to give, the "manager" stoops to a degree of baseness that outrages our best feelings, and should call down upon his head the strongest execration. Recently, the return of Jenny Lind to this country was announced, coupled with the declaration that the marital connections of the "Nightingale" had not proved happy, and that a separation was anticipated. To this, a New York paper answers:—"The report is only a 'dodge' of the manager to get the lady talked about." (1)

Here we have a lower depth of baseness than we remember to have seen in connection with this particular kind of business. Does not every true heart throb in instant indignation at so mean an outrage! Who is this tricky manager? The public ought to know his name.

Lowell Mason, now in Europe, writes that it has become fashionable in England, and to some extent on the continent, to omit the *interlude*—or playing between the stanzas—by the organ, in singing hymns.

JENNY LIND.

The New York Commercial says that it has learned, on good authority, that Jenny Lind has signified her determination to make another visit to this country. She will sing at various places in Germany during the present year, and the following season will appear in opera at London. Afterward, she will come to the United States, and give concerts in all the principal cities, remaining here probably two or three years. She will also, it is said, appear in opera. This may or may not be reliable intelligence. Should she return to this country, we hope our people will set their faces firmly against the exorbitant prices that were charged for her concerts when here before. These prices were out of all proportion to the pleasure and advantage derived from her musical performances, incomparable as they were. No concert or musical entertainment is worth more than a dollar for a single admission; and all that is paid above this price is so much uselessly expended.

HIGH PRICED OPERAS AND CONCERTS.

We are pleased to observe in the public mind, a growing opposition to the exorbitant charges which, of late, first class singers have managed to extort from the lovers of music. In this city we know that a very large number of opera-goers absented themselves, from principle, during the late series of operas by Sontag—excellent as they were. The system of high prices they regarded as a public evil, and though able to pay the prices, denied themselves a real gratification in order to discountenance a system based on a false estimate of the real value of such performances. If editors and musical reporters would only come out on the right side in this question—refusing to let a few tickets of admission influence their opinions or induce silence—a better and more healthy state of things would soon exist. The idea of giving a singer five, six or seven hundred dollars a night,

is preposterous. The plea that she has devoted years to the acquirement of skill in her art, will go for nothing with those who reflect that in any of the learned professions—the law for instance—far greater and more prolonged labor is required to attain eminence; and yet, what lawyer can demand such fees? The elevation of the mere ornamental and artistic above the useful, is one of the errors of the day; and those who serve society in the more useful callings, have an interest in seeing it corrected. Some papers are already speaking out plainly on this subject. We trust their number will increase.

HIGH PRICES TO SINGERS.

We are glad to perceive the signs of a reaction in the matter of high prices to singers; and we trust the day is near at hand, when a prima donna in this country will find herself obliged to perform to meagre houses, when she fixes a price upon her services so high, that even with the exorbitant charge of two dollars for an admission, the local manager can afford only third and fourth rate performers to sustain parts in the opera. Such was the case recently in our city, when Albani received about eight hundred dollars a night. If the press would only speak out decidedly on this subject, the change to a better order of things would be immediate. We have spoken distinctly on this subject before, and now quote some remarks of the *Evening Bulletin*, and ask the reader's attention thereto:—

"Now we have had such genuine pleasure in listening to Madame Albani, her delicious voice, and her marvellous ease of execution linger so delightfully in the memory, that we dislike to find fault with her; but we must say that it is a piece of unreasonable extortion in her, to exact such terms for herself and her poor troupe, as make it almost impossible for any but wealthy people to indulge in the luxury of a visit to the opera. If her associates were all worthy to sing with her, there would not be so much room for complaint. But an opera, with one part well sung, and the rest murdered, is not worth one dollar, much less two. And when, as is so often the case, a man has to hire a carriage, and take one or two or more of his family with him, it is not surprising that he should first consider whether the six, eight, ten, or twelve dollars to be expended, might not procure some more permanent and useful indulgence, and at last decide that it would. To this common sense conclusion, to which nearly all lovers of music, so distinguished from worshippers of

fashion, must have arrived, we attribute to the falling off in the audiences during the last week of the season.

"The opera can never be established in America until it is made accessible to the masses. The truest love of music, as an art, resides not in the mansions of wealth and fashion, but in the plainer houses of less showy citizens. It is found, too, among the foreign residents, Germans, French, and others, who are usually too poor, or too prudent to spend two dollars for the gratification of an hour or two. To reach these, and enlist them in the cause of building up the popularity of the art, the prices must be brought down, and this can only be done by refusing to sanction the extravagant demands which is now the fashion for leading artists to make. When Jenny Lind came here, and under Barnum's tactics, exacted an unheard-of fee for the luxury of hearing her, the severest blow was inflicted upon the fortunes of musical progress in this country. The fashion thus set must be followed by all her successors, and the country bids fair to be overrun with adventurers from the Old World, all determined to bleed the gullible Yankees of their gold, and hurry back to Europe to retire on fortunes gathered by singing for a few months, among a people whom they cannot but ridicule and despise for their easy submission to extortion.

"The best course for Americans to pursue is to refuse to yield to the exactions of these foreign adventurers. Why should an artist like Madame Albani get from a manager eight hundred dollars for an evening's performance, that in Europe would be considered well paid for an eighth of the amount? Neither she, nor even Grisi or singers of greater fame, ever got any thing like such a salary at the London or Paris opera houses; and no matter how much value we may set upon their vocal endowments, such a salary is ridiculously large, and could not be got among any people but the Americans."



HINTS TO YOUNG MUSICIANS.

Always play as if a master heard you.
Dragging and hurrying are equally great faults.
Learn betimes the fundamental laws of Harmony.

Be sure and accomplish whatever you undertake.

Practise regularly every day. Let nothing interfere with this.

When you are playing, never trouble yourself about who is listening.

Only when the form is entirely clear to you, will the spirit become clear.

In every period there have been bad compositions, and fools who have praised them.

You must not circulate poor compositions; nor even listen to them, if you are not obliged to.

If any one lays a composition before you for the first time, for you to play, first read it over.

Never dilly-dally about a piece of music, but attack it briskly; and never play it half through.

Play in time! The playing of many virtuosos is like the gait of a drunkard. Make not such your models.

Be not frightened by the words Theory, Thorough-Bass, Counterpoint, &c.; they will meet you friendly, if you meet them so.

Have you done your musical day's work, and do you feel exhausted? Then do not constrain yourself to further labor. Better rest than work without spirit and freshness.

"On Friday evening last," says Lowell Mason, writing from Paris to the editor of the *New York Musical Review*, "we attended the regular service at the Jewish synagogue. There was a congregation of perhaps three hundred men, occupying the lower part of the house, and a few scattering women were seen in the gallery. The men all sit or stand with heads covered; and although four of us, Americans, took off our hats when we entered, we were told to put them on again, and obeyed orders. There was very little appearance of reverence or solemnity; indeed, none that could be observed. The appearance of the assembly was somewhat like that of a New England town meeting, after having been called to order by the chairman. There was a choir of about twelve or fourteen boys, with men for tenor and bass, and the harmony parts were sung. All the service was chanted, in a responsive manner, by priest or priests, choir and people, with the exception of

two airs or melodies, which were sung by the choir. These were both modern, and even the chants did not seem to come from David or Solomon, but were more like the common chant, somewhat modified by a kind of recitative or declamatory manner of utterance. On the whole, the Jewish service here was not one of much interest, considered either religiously or musically."

A writer from San Francisco says:—"Theatricals are at a low ebb in this country. In this city, especially, the public have become remarkably indifferent in respect to dramatic performances. This is owing, in a great measure, as well to the inferior character of the companies that have played, as to the high prices of admission demanded to the theatres. There is, therefore, but one house, the American, now regularly open in San Francisco, and that is doing a very meagre business. The principal theatre, the Jenny Lind, has been purchased by our Common Council for a City Hall. Our Fathers paid for it, for reasons they can doubtless explain, the precious little sum of two hundred thousand dollars, fully double the amount that any person, not immediately and personally interested, ever imagined it to be worth. Our press, without an exception, cried out lustily against this prodigal expenditure of the people's money, and the people themselves held a giant mass meeting, to arrest the action of the Council on this subject; but all this was of no avail. The building was bought, and at least fifty thousand dollars more must now be expended to make it fit for the object for which it has been obtained."

In one of his letters to the Musical Review, Lowell Mason mentions a brief visit paid to the Monument of Beethoven. He says:—"On our way down the Rhine, we made a stop at Bonn, just long enough to see a little of the place where the great modern composer was born, and to look upon the monument which art has here erected to the memory of one of the greatest of artists. The monument stands upon a public square, and consists of a fine bronze statue of the symphonist, holding an open sheet of paper in the left, and a pencil in the right hand. Our little company, together with a few strangers who went to see it at the same time, stood under the deep shady trees by which it is surrounded, and gazed upon it for a few moments in perfect silence, and with intense interest. No musician who is able to bring up to his imagination the wonderful original, can look upon this statue without a deep feeling of reverence and admiration, amounting as nearly to worship or adoration as may be rendered to the highest manifestations of human genius."

In a prize essay by C. M. Cady, on "Music in America," we find the following observations on congregational and choir singing:

"The growth and progress of congregational singing in the Protestant churches on the continent, has been steady and uniform. It now prevails to a great extent in Germany and other parts of Europe; and Mr. Lowell Mason, in recent letters, describes this part of divine worship

as being, artistically, very incorrect, but still inconceivably grand and powerful in its devotional effect. In England we find that where congregational singing has entirely superseded the use of choirs, and efforts have been remitted to instruct the people in musical science, the performance has degenerated till it has become intolerable, and choir-singing has taken its place; as was also the case in the Puritan churches of New England about 1721. In some of the Protestant churches of England, congregational singing is now in a good condition, while in others it has become exceedingly bad; but the public feeling seems, if we can judge from the tone of their *Reviews* and *Journals*, to be strongly in favor of improving and reinstating it. We see, then, that these two forms of church music, once severally indicative of Popery and Protestantism, are now both used in the Protestant churches of Europe, while in this country choir-singing is exclusively used, except in a few churches where congregational singing is being introduced. Congregational singing must be regarded, in accordance with the sentiments not only of the Reformers, but of all spiritual Christians, as the *truly devotional style of church music*. On the other hand, choir-singing is, we think, fully proved by its past history to be the *impressive style*, and needed in connection with the congregational style, to keep the latter from degeneracy.

"The true ideal of church music is then, we think, realized only in the union of these two styles. We would have a well-drilled choir to perform motets, designed to induce a devotional frame of mind in the assembled audience, to perform all the chants used, and sing all psalms and hymns of a hortative character, as well as those of a meditative caste which require to be sung to tunes of a delicate nature, and to lead the *whole congregation* once or twice during each service, in singing a devotional psalm or hymn to an appropriate, plain choral tune. Experience shows that these styles are not to be blended in the same piece. The congregation should *not* sing on choir music; in choral music *all* should sing; else the effect of both is marred."

A correspondent of the New York Musical World, who says that he has looked over the account current of Barnum with Jenny Lind, avers, that it is a most "remarkable document," and ought to be published "for the astonishment and edification of the world generally, and singers particularly." According to his statement, Barnum and Jenny averaged over \$3000 a-piece on each concert. After all expenses were paid, Barnum received on the whole engagement, the handsome sum of \$308,000, and the Nightingale \$302,000. This was coining sweet sounds into gold at a rate unheard of before. Large as the sum paid for these concerts, we presume there are few who had the pleasure of listening to Jenny Lind who now consider the money they paid for the privilege, a foolish expenditure. Her wonderful tones, that seemed, at times, like echoes of heavenly music, still linger, and will linger through life, in the ears of thousands. Like "a thing of beauty," such sounds are "a joy forever."

HOUSEHOLD MUSIC.

One evening, taking my little boy, a child of two and a half years, in my arms, to lull him to rest, as have fond mothers since the world began, I took up a book of simple nursery rhymes, that some one had left on my table, containing the words and music on opposite pages. As I listlessly turned the leaves, and carelessly hummed the music, I heard a soft sigh from my child; but, without apparently noticing him, I sang on, when dewy tears welled out from beneath his closed eyelids; but still I sang, till, nestling closer to my bosom, the little fellow half whispered, his voice broken by sobs, "Oh, mamma, *don't* sing that!" Surprised at the circumstance, I sought for the cause. Examining the book, I found I had been humming the well-known air by Sir J. Stevenson, the Vesper Hymn. I knew no association connected with the air that could awaken such emotion in my boy; the words were entirely commonplace, and could not have been the cause; and to determine that question, many weeks after, under like circumstances, I again sang the same air to words totally different, but the same result followed,—first the silent tear, then a burst of mournful weeping.

Often, when I've heard the power of music denied or ridiculed, have I thought of this incident. Tell us, ye wise utilitarians! dwells there not a potent spell in an art that can work effects like these? Tell us, ye learned metaphysicians! what subtler chords vibrate in the human heart, than answer to its touch? Oh, ye mothers! sisters! prize your lovely gift, and by it weave strong bands, wreath the golden chains binding in one loving circle the dwellers at your hearth-stone.

Oh, ye parents! ye who bend daily at the altar of devotion, lose not the holy influence of this "most sweet" accompaniment: let with your morning orisons—let with your evening sacrifice ascend the voice of praise to the Highest! "for praise is comely, and it is good to sing praises unto our God!" Yea: with the royal psalmist let us say, "I will sing praises while I have being."

Who does not feel and acknowledge the power of the human voice? In whose memory—how thickly overpiled it may be, with a long life's gathered incrustations, with the thick layers of a stern life's realities—down, deep down in the heart's recesses,—dwells there not the echo of a

mother's lullaby—the remembrance of sweet hymns heard in earliest years? In "visions of the night," in dreams of long-gone times and scenes, they come to us like whispers of distant lutes, like the harmony of soft chords, such as one conceives the angels loved to harp.

Because the influence of music is not measurable by a mathematical scale, is not reducible to a logarithmic expression, too many deem its power a fiction of poets and dreamers: but parents! surrounded by young, impressible minds, reject so false an estimate, and despise not the moulding power you may exert on plastic hearts, by your tuneful praises of the "Lord of Hosts." Silently and unseen, perhaps, you shall plant a seed that "after many days" shall prove a gentle chord to lure back to paths of peace and virtue, a wayward, erring child, who, though widely straying, shall, in some silent watch, hear the still whisper of a reproving conscience, floating in, as it were, upon his soul's ear, in tones of an old, familiar melody—

"Return, oh wanderer! return,
And seek an injured Father's face."

What a reward! what notes of rapture shall sound from the redeemed, over one so reclaimed!

It needs no great skill in the *science* of music for this office in social worship. Sing the old airs and melodies your grandsires sang. The older, simpler, perhaps the dearer. They have the charm of associations of your early days. They are linked with sweet memories of those, perhaps, who have long sung nobler songs, long struck golden lyres. There's no melody on earth so perfect as the blending of kindred voices. Gather, then, your households, and attune their hearts and voices to sing "the song of Moses and the Lamb." What medium more fitting by which to celebrate the praises of a Saviour such as ours—to extol a love so ineffable as His? Daily let our voices "beat the heavenward flame," preparing us to join the seraph-choir, if at last we be permitted to

"Soar and touch the heavenly strings,
And vie with Gabriel while he sings
In notes that are divine."

Musical Review and Advocate.

POWER OF MUSIC.—A clergyman, says Mrs. Sigourney, possessing much knowledge of human nature, instructed his daughters in the theory and practice of music. They were all observed to be exceedingly amiable and happy. A friend inquired if there was any secret in his mode of education. He replied, "When anything disturbs their temper, I say to them, 'Sing,' and if I hear them speaking against any person, I call them to sing to me; and so they have sung away all causes of discontent, and every disposition to scandal." Such a use of this accomplishment might serve to fit a family for the company of angels. Young voices around the domestic altar, breathing sacred music, at the hour of morning and evening devotion, are a sweet and touching accompaniment.

MARIE ALBONI.

This great vocalist—the greatest, indeed we may say, the only great modern *contralto* who has of late years appeared upon the stage of Europe—for, be it remembered, that Grisi, Sontag, and others of the leading vocalists of the day, as well as Jenny Lind herself, are all *soprani*—was born, as we are told, in 1826, her father being a captain in the Papal army. Despite the extraordinary proofs of her talent and love for music which she gave even at an early age, her father was prejudiced against her making it a profession, and it was only at the decided opinion of many of his best friends that he at length gave his consent that Marie should cultivate her natural powers. This was when she had attained the age of eleven. In consequence of this consent, after passing two years under the tuition of M. Bagioli, she was admitted to the Conservatory of Bologna. This school was then under the administration of Rossini, and with this remarkable and eminent composer she remained until she had reached the age of fifteen.

At this period Rossini contracted an engagement for her with the Theatre of Bologna. Her first appearance was in the part of Sappho, and she at once established herself in the opinion of the leading Italian critics as one of the most eminent vocalists of the day. In the following year she appeared at Milan, and there decided her previous triumph. From Milan she travelled to the principal capitals of Europe, in each of which she established her reputation; being, perhaps, the only great female vocalist who has met with equal success in Vienna, Berlin, Naples, St. Petersburg, London and Paris. Her husband, to whom she has been but a few months married, is the Count Achille Pepoli, of Venice, a gentleman, of great literary talent, and son of the distinguished poet of that name, whose devotion to his country and enmity to Napoleon and despotism have rendered his name so famous with his countrymen. Madame Alboni arrived in New York in June last, by the Hermann. Her intention in coming at this period was for the purpose of visiting, with her husband, the splendid scenery of our own country, and she was in this case, as she is in most others, the herald of her own arrival.

She had, however, brought with her several letters of introduction to some of the more influential citizens of New York, and by their persuasions she was induced to give two concerts previous to the final termination of the summer season in that city. These concerts, we need scarcely say, were brilliantly successful ones, and had the effect of determining her to pass the year in a tour through America. The voice of Madame Alboni is one of the most brilliant as well as the sweetest and most sonorous of true *contraltos*. It descends to *fa* in the bass clef, and ascends to the *do* in alt, having the extended compass of two and a half octaves complete. One must have heard this great artist to be aware of the singular skill with which she regulates and controls this magnificent organ, for no description could give any fair idea of her superb voice, and its unequalled power and sweetness, as well as the ease with which it is exerted, and the intense

care with which it has been cultivated. It is, however, in her genuine chest voice, which is of almost unparalleled power and beauty, that her real strength as the principal *contralto* of the age resides, and that she is chiefly to be esteemed as the only legitimate successor to Pisanoni.



THE BEAUTIFUL IN MUSIC.

O Decus Phœbi, et dapibus supremi
grata testudo Jovis! O laborum
Dulce lenimen, mihi cunque salve
Rite vocanti.—Hos.

Awake, Æolian lyre, awake,
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings;
From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their many progress take:
The laughing flowers that round them blow
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along,
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong;
Through verdant vales and Ceres' golden reign,
Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour:
The rocks and nodding groves re-bellow to the roar.
GRAY.

The great Edmund Burke thought that there was a direct connection between the mental impression produced by the sensation of softness and smoothness, and the idea of the beautiful. Whoever, says he, compares his state of mind on feeling soft, smooth, variegated, unangular bodies, with that in which he finds himself on the view of a beautiful object, will perceive a very striking analogy in the effects of both, and which may go a good way towards discovering their common cause. Feeling and sight in this respect differ in but a few points. The touch takes in the pleasure of softness, which is not primarily an object of sight; the sight, on the other hand, comprehends color, which can hardly be made perceptible to the touch; the touch, again, has the advantage in a new idea of pleasure resulting from a moderate degree of warmth; but the eye triumphs in the infinite extent and multiplicity of its objects. But there is such a similitude in the pleasures of these senses that I am apt to fancy, if it were possible, that one might discern color by feeling (as it is said some blind men have done) that the same colors and dispositions of coloring, which we found beautiful to the sight, would be found likewise most grateful to the touch. But, setting aside conjectures, let us pass to the other sense of hearing.

In this sense, Mr. Burke proceeds to say, we find an equal aptitude to be affected in a soft and delicate manner, and how far sweet or delicate

sounds agree with our descriptions of beauty in other senses, the experience of every one must decide. Milton has described this species of music in one of his juvenile poems, (*l'Allegro*.) Milton was well versed in the art of music, and no man had a finer ear, with a happier manner of expressing the affection of one sense by metaphors taken from another. The description is as follows:—

"And ever against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out;
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running;
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony."

It is curious to observe how the metaphysical philosopher, and such a philosopher as Mr. Burke, too, can look at this exquisite passage simply with a view to its scientific illustration of his theory. Let us parallel this, he says, "with the softness, the winding surface, the unbroken continuance, the easy gradation of the beautiful in other things; and all the diversities of the several senses, with all their several affections, will rather help to throw lights from one to another to finish one clear consistent idea of the whole than to obscure it by their intricacy and variety." Now, there can be no question that in the above passage Milton has, in a very admirable manner, and (considering the age of the poet at the time) in a truly marvellous manner, contrived artistically to suggest the idea of unbroken and yet varied continuance of pleasant sound, or (for nothing can better the phrase) of linked sweetness long drawn out. But the most astonishing line of the whole is that in which he sets forth the art—not at all interrupting the delicious description while he does so—the art which is used to produce this pleasing bewilderment of the senses:—

"With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running."

Observe the fearlessness with which he uses epithets that seem to be in contradiction to the qualities to which they are applied, but to which imagination willingly assents, though mere prosaic reason could not; and all this helps to work out the general effect of intricacy, joined with continuity—of prolonged sweetness not only without monotony, but with all the added pleasure that belongs to variety.

According to Mr. Burke's theory, there is but one character of music which suggests the idea of the beautiful, and that is the point which makes his theory unsatisfactory, as it is opposed to the ordinary convictions of mankind. "I shall add," he says, "to Milton's description one or two remarks. The first is, that the beautiful in music will not bear that loudness and strength of sounds which may be used to raise other passions; nor notes which are shrill, or harsh, or deep; it agrees best with such as are clear, even, smooth, and weak. The second is, that great variety, and quick transitions from one measure or tone to another, are contrary to the genius of the beautiful in music. Such transitions often excite mirth, or other sudden and tumultuous passions; but not that sinking, that melting, that languor, which is the characterised effect of the beautiful as it regards every sense."

It seems here that the philosopher, in endeavoring, as he says, to "settle a consistent idea of beauty," has restricted it within a much narrower range than truth would warrant. As far as music is concerned, who can doubt, for example, that in Handel's "Messiah" there is beauty in the magnificent chorus, "the Government shall be upon His shoulders;" as well as in the exquisite air of "Every Valley?" The character of the beauty is different in each, but they are *both* beautiful. He who doubts it upon Mr. Burke's theory, might as well doubt that there is beauty in the Belvidere Apollo, and suppose that the Venus of Medici, which Byron says "fills the air around with beauty," alone deserves the homage of those who seek the beautiful in marble. But they are both beautiful, and the Apollo has the higher beauty of the two.

There are various characters of beauty in sound as well as in form. There is the beauty which we associate with dignity and majesty, and to which a great volume of sound is necessary, and there is also the beauty of soft melody which gently steals upon the senses and the heart, making us exclaim with the gentle Jessica—

"I ne'er am merry when I hear sweet music."

Nor can it be admitted by those who relish (as who does not?) the waltz music of Beethoven, that there cannot be beauty in music which has great variety and quick transition from one measure to another. Liveliness is not the quality which strikes most in this music, but richness and beauty of expression. It is not brilliancy, it is not airiness, but a kind of conversational interchange of musical thought; and the melody is as full and satisfying as in music of a much more ambitious character.

So far as regards music, Mr. Burke seems to have in some measure confused the sentiment of tenderness with the idea of beauty, and no doubt there is a close connection between them. Nay, Shakspeare's mention of music is generally in connection with its softening or soothing effect:—

"For Orpheus' lute was strung with poets' sinews,
Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones,
Make tigers lame, and huge leviathans
Forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands."

But there is a sense of the beautiful connected with the grand as well as with the tender, and when the loudest notes of the organ roll in musical thunder through the gloriously-beautiful arches of Westminster Abbey, the fervor which such strains inspire has as close a connection with a sense of the beautiful as the touching melody of some alto-voice in the anthem, which melts us into tears.

our own volcanoes, only larger and deeper. Great internal forces must have been at work to create these appearances. Why not suppose, then, that stones might be projected thence with force enough to pass the limits of the moon's attraction, and to come within that of the earth? Calculations were made which proved that a stone or mass of matter, projected from the moon with an initial velocity five or six times as great as that of a ball issuing from a cannon's mouth, would be carried so far that it would not return to the moon, but either continue to revolve in obedience to new attractions, or be precipitated upon a body of more powerful attraction if approaching its sphere.

Another hypothesis, similar to the one just named, is that which supposes these aerolites to be smaller fragments of that presumed ancient planet between Mars and Jupiter, the breaking up of which has produced the numerous small planets or asteroids which crowd this part of the heavens. But a few years ago only four such bodies were known to us—Vesta, Juno, Ceres, Pallas. Nineteen others have been lately added to this number. These bodies are very various in size—some of them so small as to defy exact admeasurement. Astronomical considerations fully sanction the idea of a common origin; and if they be truly fragments of a larger body, may we not reasonably infer that the same force which separated them must have projected into space numerous fragments yet smaller, and with orbits more highly inclined to the primitive planet? May not some of these smaller fragments have come into proximity to the earth, and within its attraction? All that can be said in favor of this, as of the lunar hypothesis, is that it is not impossible; no direct evidence can be put forward in its support. It is a mere speculation, and has yielded to another theory of still stronger probability.

This, the only remaining theory, is one which connects meteoric stones with meteors of other forms, and assigns the origin of all to those interplanetary spaces which have usually been regarded as void and unoccupied—or occupied only by thin, imponderable ether. The discovery of the vast number of cometary bodies traversing space in all directions, is one of the circumstances which have led gradually to create new views on this subject. If space is thus occupied by bodies varying infinitely in magnitude, orbits and periods of revolution, the orbits of some of them altered by their approach to the greater planets, why may we not suppose that portions of matter yet smaller may be in motion around us; apparent only when they come so near to the earth as to be deflected, or rendered luminous by its influence? Meteoric stones not only come from beyond the limits of our atmosphere, but enter with vast velocity. Numerous and exact observations have proved the same to be equally true in the case of shooting-stars and meteoric globes of light. Hence, it seems probable that aerolites, meteors and shooting-stars, have a common origin in matter of some form or other, variously revolving in the space through which our own globe is moving.

In its revolution round the sun the earth passes through a space of 190 millions of miles in the

course of six months. If, according to Arago's calculation or conjecture, there be eight millions of comets having their revolution within the solar system; and if there be other bodies, dense or attenuated, in still greater numbers, revolving on orbits equally eccentric, then some idea may be formed of the masses of matter in the interplanetary spaces, which the earth may pass at a greater or less distance in its annual circuit of nearly four hundred millions of miles around the sun. It is easy, then, to conceive of the progressive motion of the earth bringing it into proximity to numerous eccentric orbits of meteors or asteroids, which will thereby be deflected more or less from their course, some of them actually infringing upon our planet. The passing of such bodies is supposed to be the cause of meteors and shooting-stars, and their luminousness is probably derived from the reflexion of light from the earth.

This, which is now the received theory in regard to meteors and shooting-stars, is rendered almost certain by the fact that there are well attested instances of stones—single or numerous—falling at the time of the appearance of meteoric bodies. And if it be well proved in a few instances that these fire-balls exploding have thrown down stones upon the earth—the presumption becomes strong that analogous meteorical elements are present in all, whether precipitated or not. It has been determined, with considerable accuracy, that shooting-stars have sometimes a height of from 15 to 150 miles, and a velocity of 30 miles in a second, and that they pass the earth most frequently at a distance of 20 to 50 or 60 miles above it.

VOCAL EMBELLISHMENTS.

It is not sufficient that beautiful melodies be invented, they must also be executed in a perfect manner. But if their creation be difficult, their perfect execution is not less so. Let not the latter art be compared with that of simple declamation; for, out of a hundred persons capable of declaiming well, scarcely one or two will be found who are able to sing even tolerably.

To form a singer of excellence, the following qualifications are requisite:—1st, a voice at once sonorous, flexible, and agreeable, and of a sufficient and equal compass; 2d, a lively sensibility; 3d, an exquisite taste; 4th, a good school; 5th, organs of hearing sufficiently exercised and possessed of great delicacy. It is indeed rare to find all these qualities united in the same individual; and we frequently meet those who pretend to the name of singers, who are destitute of nearly the whole of them. How many compositions are sacrificed to an execution devoid of delicacy, taste and feeling, of everything calculated to charm and interest!

It is remarkable that no country has produced such excellent voices, such perfect singers, and in so great a number, as Italy; but then no nation has had such excellent schools of singing as the Italians. Among the singers of both sexes in this happy climate, there are some, who, by the magic of their voice, and their incomparable manner of performing melody—Farinelli, for instance,—

have removed, in some measure, the wonders of the music of ancient Greece.

There is one manner of singing in Italy, another in France, and a third in Germany. In Italy, the true method of singing is still preserved to a certain degree, though its present mode is different from what it was formerly; its best schools begin to degenerate. In France they still scream more than they sing. In Germany, they do both the one and the other.

From the times of Allegri, Leo, and Durante, to those of Hasse and Handel, the manner of singing was at once simple, expressive, and grand. The singer seldom ventured to employ any other ornaments than the appoggiatura, the trill, and some other passing embellishments, till he came to the *point d'orgue* at the close of the air, when he considered himself on his own domain. The composer of that period had, at least, as much share in the success of the air as the singer. Afterwards things took another turn; and, instead of singing in this simple and faithful manner, they began to ornament everything. The composers became the slaves of the singers, and in process of time were considered as altogether out of the question. All they had to do was to get up a kind of skeleton airs, which the singers took upon themselves to animate and color by their manner of embellishing them. Novelty is always attractive, not to say seductive. The public were far from imagining what an injury they were doing to music, by lavishing such ill-judged applause upon airs of this kind; for that is the period from which we may date the decline of the art in Italy.

But cannot the composer, who makes an air of this kind, himself compose the embellishments, and conduct them upon a richer harmony, and with more varied modulation? Yes, if he be composing instrumental music; but I caution him to be upon his guard if he is writing for the voice. In the first place, a composer is not a singer; what he would compose for his voice, or with his voice, will not suit either the talent or the voice of a skilful singer. *Prescribed* ornaments are sure to be almost always ill-executed. In a singer of talent, embellishments are generally the result of the inspiration of the moment, which is infinitely more effective than anything that the study and researches of the composer can produce. The singer adapts them to the nature and compass of his voice, and modifies them according to the feelings and impulse of the moment; all these considerations must necessarily be neglected, if the embellishments are written by the composer.—*Reicha's Treatise on Melody.*

MY YOUNGEST SISTER.

When I was a little girl, my mother, one pleasant May-day, permitted my little sister Alice and myself to visit a cousin, who lived nearly a mile distant. We were in high glee, and were very soon prepared to start. I was in such haste to see cousin Harriet, that I walked as fast as possible, and Alice was obliged to run to keep pace with me. Still we proceeded very well until we entered a piece of woods, where the path was

very uneven. But, inconsiderate as I was, I hurried her along, and, becoming impatient, would every few moments give her a jerk, and tell her, "Come along faster; I'll not stay out all the afternoon for you. I'll leave you in the woods, and the bears will get you." Though I knew very well that there were no bears there, and did not think of leaving her, yet I unkindly wished to excite her fears, and thereby make her come more rapidly. Sometimes I would even run on before, until I was lost to her view; and when, by a fresh exertion of her almost exhausted strength, she would overtake me, I would say, "You had better hurry;" and, at any noise, I would tell her to listen, and see if the bears were not coming. When we reached our uncle's, Alice seemed much exhausted, and did not join in play with her usual vivacity; but I thought but little of it at the time. When evening came, we rode home with our uncle, who was going to our house on business. When we alighted from the carriage, we ran in, and I began to tell mother what fine times we had had; but Alice lay down on the sofa, and soon fell asleep. When mother undressed and put her in bed, she noticed that she was slightly feverish, and remarked, "I think Alice has played too hard." "I guess not, mamma," I said; "I believe she did not play quite as hard as usual, this afternoon;" and here the conversation ended. About midnight, I was awakened by Alice's shrieks of "Oh! Marian, Marian, do not leave me; the bears, the bears!" I started up in alarm, saying, "Why, Alice, are you dreaming? We are not in the woods. There are no bears here. We are in our own little bed at home." With kisses and caresses, I gradually soothed her; but scarcely had I fallen into a drowse, before I was again aroused by her shrieks, which soon brought mother to the bed-side. She immediately discovered that Alice was delirious, and suffering with a high fever. A physician was instantly summoned, who pronounced her disease a violent attack of brain fever. I related the events of the preceding day to mother, on the first opportunity, and prayed God to forgive me, and to bless the means used for my little sister's recovery. Alice lingered many weeks without any material change, and few were admitted to her bed-side.

One morning, as I came down to breakfast, my mother said to me, "Alice is much better, and has just been inquiring for you. After breakfast, you may go and sit by her."

Oh! how much joy did those words convey to my heart! and as I sat by her, and had her full assurance of forgiveness, how very happy I felt! Every day I gathered beautiful flowers, such as Alice loved, and placed them in a little vase, where she could look at them; and when, at last, she was able to walk out, I endeavored, by increased tenderness, to make up for that one act of unkindness which cost her so much suffering. Her sickness left her in a decline, and in a few months she died.—*Youth's Cabinet.*

The life of man is in reality but one continued existence, the end of which is to make himself perfect.

"How do yees feel, Shamus?" sez the little man, considerately.

"Ayeh! 'tis hard tellin' that same," sez Shamus, "for the summer dust is not dhryer nor my mouth."

"Would you like to thry a taste of the raal goolden stuff?" sez the little man; an' he out wid a bottle full of liquor, as red as a fiery furnace.

"Many thanks to ye," sez Shamus; "but I'd rather not, if it's all the same."

"As you plaze," sez the little man: 'tis yours is the loss, I'm thinkin'; an', tossin' off the flamin' dhrink hisself, he smacked his lips afther it, as if the flavor wor exactly to his taste.

"Augh! much good may it do ye," sez Shamus; "but sure, if it didn't burn yer insides, it's by rason of the cast-iron stomach ye have."

"Poof!" sez the little man; "'twas but a wake table liquor. A gentleman should always be abstamious whin he thravels."

"Well, the hours rowled by, an' there was Shamus as continted as a girleen wid her first kiss, till the army of weeny workmen got up a dacent faction fight by way of divarashin. 'Twas onaisy thin the little man got.

"Come," sez he, "are ye rested, Shamus? there's not much time to spare; 'tis hard upon cock-crow now."

"Away wid ye, thin," sez Shamus.

"Whoop! whoroo!" sez the little man; an' away wint the wondherful road, and Shamus afther it, at the top of his speed, ontill, at last, he come nigh to the green bank on the far side of the bog.

"Stop," sez he, "I'm goin' to rest myself."

"Rest on the bank, Shamus," sez the little man, softly.

"Faix," sez Shamus, "I'm betther off here, I does be thinkin'."

"Did I iver hear the likes o' that!" sez the little man, "an' he so near over! Up wid ye, Shamus, I say! Thecock 'ud be crowin' prisenly."

"Good luck to the darlin'; I'll be extremely glad to hear him," sez Shamus.

"Tear an' ages!" sez the little man, "don't ye mane to go any fuder?"

"Niver a fut!" sez Shamus.

"I'll tear up the road below yez!" sez the little man, in a passion.

"That's agin the conthraht," sez Shamus.

"How will I desthroy it afther ye, thin?" sez the little man.

"Oh, begorra!" sez Shamus, "'tis none of my business: sure ye can lave it, if ye likes."

"Oh the villain! the chate! the desaiver!" sez the little man; stampin' and throwin' his arums about wid the rage that wor in him.

"Arrah, why will ye be callin' yerself bad names?" sez Shamus. "Sure I tuk ye for a dacent an' respectable little ould gentleman."

"Tare an' ounties!" sez the little man, quite beside hisself; "take that, ye vagabone!" and he struck Shamus a lick wid his fist that knocked him sinceless. By good luck, at that minnit the cock crowed: and thin—oh, but 'twas the mysterious thing of all—the swarms of weeny workmen, and the little masther, slowly melted away an' disappeared, colorin' like a dark red tunder-cloud the mornin' mist.

"Oh, begorra! but the afther matther bates bannagher. Whin Shamus comes to hisself, he wor lyin' at the dure of his bit cabin among the hills, wid the impty poteen jug rowled up alongside him.—*Lady's Book.*

THE NEW OPERA HOUSE.

The Legislatures of Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania, have abandoned their ancient opposition to dramatic performances, and granted, what formerly could not be obtained, charters under which stockholders can unite, and, without incurring risk beyond the amount of their subscriptions, build theatres or opera houses as they have built colleges and cotton mills. The result of this enlightened legislation is beginning to appear. Already the sum of \$250,000 has been subscribed for the Boston Opera House, and the building is to be immediately commenced. In Philadelphia, considerable progress has been made in subscriptions to stock for a house intended far to eclipse in magnitude and splendor any now existing; and in this city \$165,000 have been subscribed to build an opera house at the corner of Fourteenth street and Irving place, the building of which will be commenced as soon as a further sum of \$35,000 is obtained, which the parties who have the matter in hand confidently expect will be immediately.

Having carefully read all that has been published in relation to these three projects, and made particular inquiries of those having them in charge, we have little doubt that the Philadelphia one will be the most successful, because it is neither a fashionable nor a real estate speculation, but a design to found and permanently sustain a great National Temple and School of Music, worthy of the era and of the American people. It is to be the National Opera House, because it is designed for the representation of operas in our own language, and as a school for rearing our own artists, and will appeal to the whole people and not to any class for support. It is nearly the same with a project brought forward, in Philadelphia, in 1839, and from the complete and perfect details of which, as then published, has sprung every improvement introduced into the theatres and opera houses since erected. Had the project then been carried out, the art would now be half a century in advance of its present position. The scheme was a vast one, and required a capital of nearly half a million of dollars, most of which had been subscribed when the great panic and commercial disasters, suddenly caused by the failure of several of the Philadelphia banks, led to its abandonment. We have before us the pamphlets published in 1839, describing the objects proposed in the Philadelphia Academy of Music and Grand Opera House—and the system of direction intended to be pursued. All these seem so comprehensive and perfect, that we shall make a brief synopsis of them, in the form of a statement of the requirements of a great operatic and dramatic establishment and call to it the particular attention of the parties about to build the New York and Boston opera houses.

Up to this period every attempt to establish

the Italian opera has failed. It is not an institution, but an incident dependent on the chance presence of some European prima donna. The Italian opera house in Leonard street failed, and was turned into an English theatre. Next the Astor Place Opera House was built, failed, and is about to be demolished to make room for a library. And now the Academy of Music, as it is entitled in the act of incorporation, is in all probability about to be erected in Fourteenth street, and although no mention is made in its charter of its use specially, or indeed at all as an Italian opera house, yet that is the object of the stockholders, and as an Italian opera house it is at least to be opened. Whether it can be kept open for that purpose after Grisi and Mario have inaugurated it and the charm of the novelty of their appearance has worn off, and when, as the case will be, scarcely a single world-renowned singer of the Italian stage will remain unheard in this country, forms a question for consideration and suggestion.

We are of opinion that no fine art can flourish in a country at second-hand. We believe it must be rendered national, and, in the case of music, be presented through the language the people understand. Basing thus our argument, we further believe that Europe cannot supply this country habitually with singers. It is as much and more than she can do to afford them to her own principal opera houses. Whatever may be the first and absorbing use to which the opera house may be put, in regard to Italian opera, in conformity with its title of Academy of Music and the specific provisions of its charter, it should be obliged to educate artists, and to produce original works. It is to be established, says the charter, "for the purpose of cultivating a taste for music by concerts, operas, and other entertainments, which shall be accessible to the public at a moderate charge, by furnishing facilities for instruction in music, and by rewards or prizes for the best musical compositions." In this view, it becomes an object of national consideration, and we trust accordingly that the small sum comparatively required to complete the subscription will be speedily obtained.

The expense of sustaining an opera house so nurtured at home will be at most not more than one-fourth what it would be if the artists were brought from Europe. American vocalists would be content with some few thousand dollars a year, and if they were sought for, and educated, boarded and lodged gratuitously the meanwhile, their services could be secured for several years in payment of the expenses of apprenticeship. In that way alone can the exorbitant demands of foreign artists be diminished, and the folly and extravagance of paying them from one to ten thousand dollars a night, as has been done in this city, will be for ever avoided. The rule of political economy which makes that cheap and at the same time good, which we produce at home, will be more strongly evidenced in the fine arts than even in cloths or calicoes. It may be added, that this country, owing to its common-school education, possesses more intelligent persons than any other; and there being the full average of fine voices, it enjoys extraordinary

facilities for obtaining good subjects, mental and physical, for singers.

We wish, therefore, to see this economical and national feature of the New York plan equally insisted upon with that of the Philadelphia project. The Academy of Music should be above speculation. Its character should be benign and genial. If it be considered a platform for putting money in the pockets of the last adventurers from Europe, it will assuredly fail. We see no reason why wealthy men should not endow such an institution independent of the money principle. Our colleges are so endowed, and why should not a college for lyrical art be equally esteemed? It is true we are on a false road: we have separated art and letters, which the great ancient masters of beauty, the Greeks, deemed inseparable; hence their grandeur and immortality. But why cannot true principles of æsthetics guide us, and the analysis of sight and sound form part of a liberal education? An opera house, on a grand scale, with proper illustrations, magnificent scenery and a pervasively artistic spirit, makes a common appeal to the universal sentiment of the beautiful. It educates the eye and ear alike; it involves, too, through its poetry, the study of letters. In every relation of the fine arts it should be sustained. Separated from intemperance and vice of all kinds, it is a teacher of good morals and good manners. Such may it become, under the possibilities of our political and social institutions.

The permanent attractions of an opera house are inseparable here from the use of the English language. With its use, the whole repertory of Italian, German and French operas translated, as well as our own vernacular musical dramas, can be produced. The lyrical genius of the world can be presented through our own tongue. It is considered a good run for an Italian opera to be played six times in succession; but *Cinderella*, in English, was given sixty times in succession at the Park Theatre; and *Amilie* and *The Bohemian Girl* not less than forty times. *Christy's Minstrels* also have for years been nightly attended by some six or seven hundred people, while their audiences would have counted by tens if the language had been foreign. The reasons, therefore, for producing American artists are paramount. England can no more afford us a supply of singers in our own language than Italy can of Italians. By rearing American artists we indefinitely enhance the dignity of the profession; and the moral phenomena that our country affords in some other things, may radiate over the stage. In connection with this it may be mentioned that there are some Americans now studying for the operatic stage, in Italy, and one, a lady of Boston, has appeared at Naples with success. It may yet come to pass that art, in all its ramifications, may be as much esteemed as politics, commerce or the military professions. The dignity of American artists lies in their own hands.

That *Italian* opera management in New York should thus far have failed is not surprising. High rent, making a few nights pay a whole year's rent, has been one of the causes. In London for twenty years, the system of making a season of

sixty or seventy nights, at the Italian Opera House in the Haymarket, pay a whole year's lease has been pursued. The rent has varied from \$400 up to \$1,000 a night. The latter sum was paid by Mr. Ebers during one season, as appears by his published book. In the last twenty years every manager of that house has failed. At present it is unoccupied, in consequence of Lumley's failure, and all its library, wardrobe and fixtures, have been sold at auction. At the rival, Covent Garden Italian Opera House, as appeared by the proceedings in bankruptcy against Mr. Delafield, he lost in three years a fortune of five hundred thousand dollars, into the possession of which he had just come when he undertook the management. Lumley has been called one of the ablest managers in Europe; therefore, there must be something in the system to cause failure like his and that of all those who preceded him, and it should be our aim to find out what the causes are and prevent their being engrafted on the opera in this country.

The success of the proposed Academy, besides its possession of a National school of artists, and composers, depends on various things connected with the auditorium. These may be recited as follows: The seats should be separate arm-chairs, each occupying a space of two by three feet, with ample passage-ways and lobbies. Then, between the acts people could easily leave them and return to their places; and in case of fire and alarm the house could be immediately emptied and without danger. Then there could not be practised the present system of crowding, on attractive nights, six persons on a bench not wide enough for five, and filling the passage-ways with chairs, so as to compel people to remain jammed into them, without possibility of change of position during an entire evening. Bodily torture is not a process to put a man through to enable him to enjoy an opera. A place of amusement should at least possess every comfort and luxury, which one would leave at home on going to it. It should be thoroughly well-furnished, in its lobbies, retiring and refreshment rooms, with pictures and statues to improve and gratify the taste.

All the Fine Arts to triumph individually must go together. For the same reason the scene-painting should be perfect and appropriate to every piece, and the dresses of all the actors, from the highest to the lowest, always historically exact as at the *Paris Académie*. There should be only one price of admission. This is the most important consideration of all. In Europe all people acknowledge the existence of classes. The *middle* classes speak of themselves as such, and with deference to the *higher* classes, and usually with contempt of the *lower* orders. Here, the case is different; all are sovereigns. No American man will take a lady to a second price part of the house, but he will be satisfied, with any, even if the worst place, if assured that all the places have been fairly allotted on the first-come first-serve principle. There is no class here, as in Europe, able to pay two, three or five dollars constantly, but the whole community can pay fifty cents. Hence the house must be of the largest size; larger than any in Europe, where the private box system uniformly prevails. The proposed building will seat the enormous number of from 4,000 to 5,000.

The selection of an architect for an Opera House is a most important matter, as one well acquainted with acoustics in its application to architecture can erect a building of immense size in which all the spectators can see and hear. The objection to a vast theatre does not hold good against an opera house; musical sounds are easily heard at much greater distances than spoken words, and the effect of distance to the sight is almost overcome by the high perfection of opera glasses.

The ventilation which embraces the cooling of the house to any required temperature in summer, as well as properly heating it in winter, is of the last importance. It is usually and erroneously said that Castle Garden is a model plan for a summer theatre, because of its coolness. Inside it is not cool; the balcony outside is, however. In the original plan of which we have been speaking, a system of ventilation appears to attain the object. It proposes the complete exclusion from the building of the external heat in summer by means of double-cased windows, and a perpetual supply of pure, artificially cooled air, which is to be introduced by pipes leading to shafts containing furnaces at the top of the building. The whole expense of this ventilating apparatus, if erected in the building, is estimated at ten thousand dollars. If it attain its object, as it doubtless can, it will increase the value of the property ten thousand dollars a year.

A wide lot is necessary, so as to have the auditorium, or audience-part, built in the form of a parabola or semi-circle with diverging sides, bringing all the audience near to the stage, and not on the old horse-shoe form, upon which the European opera houses are constructed. The conservatory, or musical school, should be in the same building with the opera; an additional story would give scores of small practising and lodging-rooms for the pupils, who may be supported and instructed at an expense of \$10,000 annually. There are in ordinary opera houses no proper accommodations for the performers. This should be obviated, and handsome dressing-rooms for all of them, each with a bath-room attached, should be constructed. In a word, the principle to be followed, is to render the opera house artistic and attractive in every detail, before and behind the curtain.

The lot on which it is proposed to build in this city, was lately held by Mr. Phalen, who purchased it for the end in view. It is 204 feet on Fourteenth street, by 122 feet 6 inches on Irving place. Fourteenth is a street 100 feet wide; Irving place one of 80 feet; this is a great advantage. There will be a covered carriage-way, so as to set people down inside, without exposure in bad weather. The vomitories will be ample; the staircases of the colossal order of European palaces. The solidity of the building will be remarkable. The space under the stage will be in this case 60 feet deep, to admit of scenic economies.

In the Philadelphia plan a lot of 150 by 240 feet, giving 36,000 square feet of ground, is deemed essential to include all the requirements of such a house; how far the lot on Fourteenth street, 122 by 204 feet or 25,000 square feet, can embrace the same, is a subject for inquiry.

If Boston, a city one quarter the capacity of

New York, and with one-tenth of the transient population, can raise \$250,000 for an opera, surely we can here. We trust, therefore, there will be no delay. It may be added that a year ago, Mr. Lumley was willing to send out a first-rate Italian company for such a house. One more point should not be forgotten; \$50,000 should be invested as part of the stock, for scenery, dresses, library, and properties, so that the cost to the manager should be simply current expenses, or so that he may put on any opera with but little additional outlay. His ability to give performances six times a week, and on yearly salaries, will, of itself, reduce the average expenses one-third each night. The current expenses of an opera are increased one-third or one-half, by its being an occasional and not a systematic thing. The absence of the pragmatical interference of government, as on the European Continent, will much increase the ease and economy of such a foundation fairly put in practice here.

We have presented our views at length on this matter, as we believe the business interests, as well as popular taste and civility of New York, are deeply concerned in having such a first-class lyrical institution self-supported in its artistic supplies, and forming a common growth with the national pursuit of high Art.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

MUSICAL PRIZE FIGHT.

Few London frequenters of spas and watering-places know the sandy town of Redcar, on the north coast of Yorkshire. It is one of those remote refuges which Nature has provided for bathers who are tired of even the moderate gaiety of Worthing; for north-country millowners who wish to wash away the smoke of Barnsley, or the soot of Sheffield; for invalids who are advised to fly from the noise of society into the noise of the elements, and for yachting barristers on the Northern Circuit who have more taste for catching cod-fish a score of miles out in the German Ocean, than for dangling after broad-hatted beauties at Harrogate or Scarborough. These are the high and important objects for which Redcar has risen from an old and obscure collection of fishing-huts on a line of sand-hills, into a broad, calm street of red-bricked lodging-houses. There is no more human tumult, there are no more signs of life, there is much less of dissipation, in the Redcar High-street on a September evening, than in any well-conducted metropolitan cemetery. The place may be likened to a long cell, into which it is good for worldlings to retire for a while and reflect on the tenor of their past life, with a view of improving the future. The few silent shops seem sacred to the memory of the names over their doorways; and, although the draper's sends forth a perfume of merinoes, silks, and fustian, and the grocer's a scent of coffee, tea, and pepper, both shops may, with very little imagination, be taken for family sepulchres. A shaky cart may jolt by with a load of glistening sea-weed for manuring land, but the horse looks drowsy and contented, as his hissing cargo drops in long brown flakes on the sandy road, and the driver moves as if he had his whole lifetime in which to perform his task. So close as Redcar is to the jar and din of the Middlesboro' iron-works, it neither hears them, nor cares for them one jot. It wants to be left alone. It has been a fishing-town beyond the memory of the oldest man, and a fishing town you will be pleased to let it remain. It has gone so far for half a century as to net lodgers as well as fish; but the lodgers were none of its seeking. As they think proper to come, they must be respectably provided for; but with no idea of extortion, or of making the most by them. Its principal hotels, while they furnish every comfort, have not yet got beyond the simplicity and moderation of commercial travellers' prices.

The iron road is too near not to tantalise the inhabitants with the prospect of cheap and rapid travelling—too distant to be readily available; the stage coach is unknown, the omnibus has faded away, and the heavy rumbling carrier's cart, with its three coarse horses harnessed

head and tail, remains the undisputed master of the position.

The inhabitants of this hill district are clanish and self-reliant. They live and marry amongst themselves, and present the high cheek-bones and hard features which generally mark the Yorkshire race. A few wild offshoots are occasionally sent out as scouts, in the shape of wandering boys who see the misty sea between the hills, and go down to its tempting fishing-boats, and away in its gliding ships; but they return as "master mariners" to be buried in their native moorland churchyard, and to add their testimony to those who have been round the world, and pronounce that there is nothing in it worth mentioning.

A favourable specimen of a moorland village in the hills, is Lofthouse, in Cleveland, about half way between Redcar and Whitby. Attracted by a handbilled advertisement of a "Grand Village Band Contest" at this place, on Friday, September 30, 1859, I procured a dog-cart at Redcar, and was driven over the greatest part of the way, like the hero of Lammormoor, along the sands, but with not quite such a melancholy result. At length, winding slowly down a hill which we had reached into a valley; past a waggon heavily laden with provisions, which was toiling over to the village festival, while the group of shouting schoolboys who were interested in its contents were making short cuts to Lofthouse, by scampering over the stubbly fields; past the village clergyman and his favourite monitor, driving over on the same cheerful errand in a substantial four-wheeled chaise; past another waggon, loaded with gravel-coloured peasants mixed with women, boys, and girls, on shafts, back, front, and sides, and almost on the wheels; past a solitary omnibus from Guisboro', specially chartered by one of the competing bands, in which an ophicleide, as large as a village pump, appeared to hold the post of honour, and dingy Sax-horns were nursed by rough-looking musical nurses, as if they were children of priceless worth; past many pedestrians who were jolting down one hill, and toiling up another, on their road to the scene of the musical prize fight; past all the signs of a not very distant attraction, down into the valley, across a stone bridge, and up through a dark fir-wood, until at last we drove up to the door of the principal inn in Lofthouse, the Golden Lion.

There was nothing very peculiar in my appearance, except that I was an alien and a stranger in a place unaccustomed to public visitors; but my general impression is that Lofthouse was wholly unable to make me out. Several dogs came up to examine me, lolled out their tongues and wagged their tails, and then disappeared in one or other of the open doorways. A large shopkeeper, in a small general way of business, surveyed me from between a number of miscellaneous articles that stood in his shop window amongst dead blue-bottles and expiring wasps. A young lady in full evening costume, even to a low dress and crinoline (the daughter of a leading

draper in the village), came out to her father's door, and after surveying me for several minutes, retired into the dim recesses of the shop, totally incapable of making me out. Another young lady at a rival draper's, who was adorning herself for the mid-day festival, after examining me several times, for periods of from one to five minutes each, from her chamber window, continued her toilet, at last, in despair, because she, too, was unable to make me out. A number of boys with vacant faces and open mouths, who stood motionless in the road at the front of the Golden Lion door, with their heads bent forward, their hands thrust into their pockets, and their knees disposed of at different degrees of inward inclination, were also perfectly unable to make me out. An aged bandy-legged man in drab cloth gaiters, who came to, and went from, the threshold of an opposite doorway, like the figure over a Swiss fancy clock, was probably making himself quite ill in his fruitless endeavours to make me out. A tottering old woman in an adjoining doorway was another observer of the single alien and stranger, and she, like the others, was incapable of making me out.

The Golden Lion, and its landlord, were far above any such idle curiosity on such a busy day (for them), and while they were as ignorant as any one in the village as to who I was, or who I might be, they made me pretty clearly understand that they cared very little to know, as long as I stood out of the way. The usual hotel form of "showing" me "to a room," was certainly gone through, and I availed myself of it to deposit my great-coat, and my travelling-bag; but, finding that six Lofthouse men were engaged at the window in hanging out a flag, and that preparations had been made for turning this and all the other sleeping apartments into tap-rooms at a later period of the day, I gave it up, without a murmur, into the hands of resolute festivity, and proceeded down stairs to the old-fashioned stone-floored parlour, that was also kitchen, tap-room, and bar.

Here I found the first band that had come into Lofthouse to try its musical skill, very busily engaged in trying the Lofthouse rum and ale; while, hanging up by hooks from the ceiling, amongst many bundles of dried winter herbs, were several cornepeans to be used in the harmonious fight.

The usual plan of band-approach appeared to be, to stop about two hundred yards outside the houses, and then to tramp in, playing a defiant march. Upon drawing up before the Golden Lion, the players formed a circle, and finished off with another defiant tune, which seemed to say to all Lofthouse, "We are Farnedale; beat that if you can!"

Before the arrival of another party of combatants, these performers retired to one of the drinking rooms, where the landlord gazed upon them with a silent but fatherly interest, having more regard to what they drank than to what they played.

They sat upon tables, and along benches

against the wall; they puffed pipes until they were almost invisible in clouds of tobacco-smoke; they disposed of their brass instruments in the window, until the hostelry looked, from the outside, like a military trumpet-maker's shop. Their faces were flushed with beer, if not with anticipated triumph, and they were encouraged to seek victory by the presence of certain gentle beings who had sworn to wear their colours to the last. A couple of Yorkshire "Arabs" had somehow drifted up from some city of large population in the county, and, while one offered to clean boots at a penny a pair, the other stood up with his nose just above the beer mugs on a table, and sang a popular song, until a member of a brass band extinguished him with the mouth of a yawning ophicleide. I am sorry to have to admit, in all candour, that these were the only two boys in the village who seemed quite capable of making me out.

I now give the rules and the programme, as they were given in excellent print to me:

REGULATIONS.

"That the district shall embrace all villages within a distance of thirty miles. That each band intending to compete shall consist of not more than fourteen members, each member having been enrolled in the said band at least three months before contesting. That each band shall have the privilege of choosing one piece of music, the other to be selected by the judge. That no professional shall be allowed to play with any band."

LOFTHOUSE GRAND VILLAGE BAND CONTEST.

On Friday, September 30, 1859.

N.B.—Placards announcing the name of each band, as they play, will be displayed upon the platform; reference then can be made to the programme. The order of playing will be decided previously by drawing lots.

PROGRAMME.

Test piece, to be played by each of the bands—

"Grand Parade March" . . . Jones.

AIRLBY BRASS BAND, 9 Performers.—Leader, Mr. R. Corney.

Selection . . . "La Sonnambula" . . . Bellini.

BILSDALE BRASS BAND, 12 Performers.—Leader, Mr. W. Hart.

Selection . . . "Twelfth Mass" . . . Mozart.

FARNDALE BRASS BAND, 11 Performers.—Leader, Mr. Potter.

Selection . . . "Lucrezia Borgia" . . . Donizetti.

GUINBORO' BRASS BAND, 12 Performers.—Leader, Mr. Bannister.

Selection . . . "Il Trovatore" . . . Verdi.

LOFTHOUSE SAX-HORN BAND, 10 Performers.—Leader, Mr. J. Walker.

Hallelujah Chorus . . . Handel's Messiah.

The contest will commence at one o'clock.

The first three of these bands were what is called "moor-bands;" that is, a troop of performers collected in a straggling district of cottages, extending from ten to twenty miles, the inhabitants of which have proportionately few opportunities for practising music together. The Guisboro' band has the good fortune to come from a town that boasts a railway terminus, and which can scarcely be called a village; while the Lofthouse Sax-horn company was the only

strictly "village" band that was entered for the musical contest.

The whole village, though it could not quite make out all the important points in the combat, was quite willing to stand still, with its hands in its pockets, and to give itself up to gazing at everything and everybody, and the moderate dissipation of an extemporised fair. The daddies (and what village is without a dozen of them?) crawled up and down the hilly street with blinking, smiling satisfaction; while the grannies (and what village is also without a dozen of them?) conferred with each other across cottage garden palings. The children assembled round every object of the slightest show or interest, in speechless astonishment, and listened wherever there was one man speaking to another.

The individual who seemed to take in the whole festival with a quiet grasp of intellect, was a dusty, yellow-coloured quarryman—or something of that kind—who was returning home to dinner from his morning's work. He said nothing, although he stood in the midst of a (Lofthouse) crowd; but the twinkle of his eye, and the saucy tilt of his ragged cap, spoke volumes, even without words. His jacket was flung over his shoulder, in the form of a soldier's breast-belt; and in his hand he held dangling a tin can, like a small oil-can, which was most probably devoted to his daily allowance of tea. He looked as if his body had been buried in clay three parts of his life, without destroying his sense of enjoyment, or his belief that whatever is, is right. The children gathered round him, as round one who was evidently good at thinking, and who might possibly give utterance to something that it would not be well to lose. Their expectations, however, were doomed to be disappointed, for, after regarding the Golden Lion, the assembled bands, and the spectators at the opposite cottages, with another eye twinkle, and another meaning smile, he walked slowly down the village hill at the Whitby end, as he had walked slowly up the other hill at the Redcar end, swinging his tea-can jauntily at his side, and dragging his heavily-booted legs after him, but making no further sign.

At length the time approached for the musical struggle, and the order was given to desert the rum-glass and the ale-can, and to march to the meadow, where the judge and the orchestra were ready. This was done in noble style, each band of performers playing its own favourite march, in its own favourite way, and being headed by its own favourite musical vanguarders. This time it was the turn of the oxen in an adjoining paddock to be thoroughly astonished, and, after regarding the troop of visitors and players with becoming gravity, they evidently came to the usual Lofthouse verdict, that they were not able to make it out. The four or five policemen from the different villages were disposed of round the meadow, and their first duty, as usual, was to chase unruly boys, who dodged behind hedges instead of paying sixpence, and coming in by the legal entrance, up a lane.

The judge got into a bathing-machine, which

had drifted up from the coast on to the hills, to serve him as an observatory, and being duly fortified with apples and a bottle of liquid, he gave the necessary and long-expected sign to begin.

It was Guisboro' that led off first (by lot) with Mr. Jones's March; and, without pretending to be critical, I may say that the performance more than equalled the composition. The Lofthouse Sax-horn band then took possession of the arena, and showed the judge and the visitors what village amateurs can do. Both of these companies were dressed in something like uniform, which may, or may not, have had an effect upon their musical unity; and it was not until the Aislaby players stepped on the platform that I, for one, amongst the audience, had an opportunity of regarding a lonely Yorkshire moor-band, standing up without any adventitious aid. Without inquiring too closely into the daily occupations of the performers (which, I am given to understand, may range from farming to iron-working, and sometimes to keeping a shop), I should say that a journeyman baker, two regular canal bargemen, three Dudley colliers in their Sunday clothes, a working blacksmith without much adornment, and two Scotch tally-men, provided with dingy trombones, cornopeans, Sax-horns, and ophicleides, would complete the picture of the Aislaby band. The Farndale and Bilsdale moor-bands that followed them, were twin brothers in appearance; and I say this with no disrespect to these humble students of a refined accomplishment, but rather to their infinite credit. They were all working men of the hardest working class, and they manfully showed like what they are.

When Mr. Jones's March had been decently blown through the five brass bands and then got rid of, the second test of comparative merit took place; the performance of the operatic and sacred selections. The same rotation was again observed, and after Guisboro' had led off with a number of airs from *Il Trovatore*, the Lofthouse band followed with the *Hallelujah Chorus*, and the moor-bands of Aislaby, Farndale, and Bilsdale respectively, with selections from *La Somnambula*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, and *Mozart's Twelfth Mass*. To say that the performance of these difficult pieces approached perfection, would only convey an untruth, but it far exceeded the ordinary standard of civilisation existing at the places from which the bands were drawn. The Bilsdale band, although playing with less spirit, perhaps, than some of their rivals, had a keen sense of harmony, and a rich mellow tone, which suited my taste even better than the performance of their more successful competitors. It was a sight to see the leader of this band, a short and sunburnt young man, like a country "boots," dressed in a waistcoat that might have been a piece of leopard's skin, except that the ground, instead of being brown, was crimson, and the

spots, instead of being black, were a very prominent white. There were several other moor flowers in this and other bands, with a taste for very similar waistcoats; and not the unapproachable Jullien, in all his glory, could compare with one of these.

To see such conductors waving a cornopean, while "T' Twel' Mass o' Mozart," or "S'lect-shuns fram t' Narma," as they were conversationally called, were being played in rather slow—and consequently Lofthouse—time, was a hopeful sight for those who travel through the moorland district in the constant fear that some ruffian will "fettle their mouths with a brick." I do not pretend to say, that because *Ah, che la morte!* is blown upon a Yorkshire trumpet, fighting is altogether a stranger to Yorkshire fists, but I think that the man who conducts the melodies of Bellini, although in a crimson waistcoat and corduroys, is not likely to bite off his neighbour's ear, or to gouge out his neighbour's eye, and is very likely to have a humanising influence on some of his less cultivated brethren, besides.

The excitement when the prizes were declared to be awarded in the following rotation

Lofthouse	First
Guisboro'	Second
Farndale	Third
Bilsdale	Fourth
Aislaby	Last

was sufficient to show that the cudgels and the wrestling ring had not altogether been exchanged for the harp; and the cheers and groans were sufficiently loud and antagonistic to warrant the presence of the police officers, who had come from every village within twenty miles. The final musical assault of the day was the triumphal return of the five bands, in the order of their adjudged excellence, to the devoted and expectant *Golden Lion*, where all the dirty glasses and mugs of the morning had been washed for the afternoon, and where fresh barrels of ale were set under groaning machines to satisfy alike the demands of the victor and the vanquished. The noise that these enraged and delighted musicians made, as they marched into the village, all playing at once, and all playing different tunes, amidst the barking of dogs, the shouting of children, the cheering of friends, and the groaning of enemies, can only be compared to *Bartholomew Fair* in its palmiest days, when every showman was beating his gong, and declaring that he alone was the possessor of the original spotted boy.

OPERATIC AMUSEMENTS.

According to what appears to be a reliable statement, we are to have Mario and Grisi with us in the Fall, on a professional visit. They have entered, it is alleged, into an engagement with Mr. Hackett, to sing in certain cities of the United States, for two thousand five hundred dollars each per night. We do not for one moment believe that any man of business, sense and experience would contract with the artistes named, or any others, to pay the exorbitant price said to be agreed upon. The speculation would inevitably be a ruinously losing one for the manager on the terms announced; and we therefore regard that part of the matter as nothing more than one of those smart tricks which are resorted to, now-a-days, to get up in advance that kind of popular excitement and curiosity out of which Barnum contrived, with the aid of Jenny Lind's great fame and superlative powers, to nett two or three hundred thousand dollars in the course of a few months. Beside the fact that Grisi and Mario combined cannot constitute such an attraction as the fair young Swede, with her fresh and marvellous voice and lyrical genius, presented to the public, the enthusiasm of our people has long since cooled towards musical celebrities, imported expressly by some calculating individual, with a view to extort a fortune in a month out of their excitable natures, and the material does not exist with which it can be, at least for a great while to come, re-awakened and stimulated into life.

But without concerning ourselves about the issue of this particular enterprise, to which we shall owe the privilege of hearing the two celebrated vocalists who are coming over to us under its unpromising auspices, the occasion is a proper one for noticing a folly which has done mischief enough, and ought to be promptly and resolutely corrected. For a number of years past Americans have been paying far too much for music. The extravagance of which we speak reached its culmination when six dollars were asked, and ten paid for a single ticket to hear the Swedish songstress in a concert room; and, since then, two dollars have been the standing price for admission to a first-class seat to the opera, notwithstanding that, with the exception of a principal singer, the company has often been exceedingly indifferent.

It has been urged, and, indeed, where the attraction was great, and the expense to a management proportionately increased, urged with some force, in justification of high charges, that our theatres and concert halls are too small to admit an audience numerous enough to make up, in the aggregate amount of tickets sold, the loss which would otherwise be sustained by reducing the prices one-half, or to a yet lower rate. But this excuse is not at all satisfactory, not alone because no abatement of cost to the public has been made when—as in the instance of Jenny Lind's, Alboni's and Sontag's appearance at Tripler Hall—the most spacious auditorium was provided, but, more especially, because the alleged heaviness of the burden upon an operatic management, which is so conveniently shifted to the shoulders of the

public, arises mainly, in fact, from the absurdly excessive salaries and wages paid to the leading, if not all, the members of a troupe. This is the root of the evil; and, until retrenchment is applied here, no sufficient and enduring reform can be effected.

It is, therefore, apparent, that the only remedy which can attack the radical vice of this whole system of extortion, depends for its application upon those who organize and govern operatic and other companies of the kind. So long, however, as they find they can over-pay their employees by successfully overcharging, in their turn, the amiable public, we may confidently expect that this abusive imposition will be practised, though theatres of any possible dimensions were erected. Hence, the people, who are ultimately made to bear all the weight of a manager's weak concession to the cupidity and arrogance of a parcel of Italian singers, half of whom could not live by their talents in their own country, and have literally, in many instances, fled here from beggary, must, by a sort of necessary order of retaliation, first turn upon the Empresario, by refusing to pay his exorbitant prices, and thereby compel him to employ his troupe at more reasonable salaries, or not employ them at all. This course of proceeding would very soon and certainly bring the majority of his retainers to terms. The truth is, that not one in a hundred of them is ever paid in Europe more than a half or fourth part of the sum received in this country; while the people of Italy, France, and Germany enjoy continually musical entertainments superior to ours, at one-fourth the prices we are forced to pay.

The American public may, and does complain very bitterly of this outrageous taxation to which foreign vocal talent subjects them; but the blame lies wholly with ourselves, in tamely submitting to be fleeced. It is high time we had begun to reverse positions, as regards the power of dictating terms, and assumed our rightful province to pay, all circumstances considered, no more for music on this side the Atlantic than is paid for it on the other. Until this stand is firmly taken, we shall continue to suffer the same exorbitancy which has been so long practised on us, and must finally abandon all hope of ever establishing the opera in the United States as a popular amusement, or even as a permanent luxury for the aristocracy of wealth.

In order to effect a change so desirable for the real interests of both, the rich must make common

"IL PIRATA."

This drama is an adaption from the Rev. Mr. Maturin's tragedy of "Bertram." The libretto is not without merit as a political composition.— It terminates rather unsatisfactorily; but, upon the whole, the adaption has been made with considerable dramatic tact and judgment.

The plot is founded upon an incident which is supposed to have taken place during the contest between Charles of Anjou, and Manfred, the natural son of the Emperor Frederic II., for the crown of the two Sicilies. Ernest, Duke of Caldora, (Signor Santini,) one of the most powerful nobles of Sicily, having fallen deeply in love with Imogene, (Madame Lalande,) whose aged father had followed the standard of Manfred, joins the forces of Charles, in the hopes of obtaining the hand of Imogene, by humbling a favoured rival, Gualtiero, (Signor Donzelli,) another adherent of the Emperor's party. Charles of Anjou, however, eventually triumphs, and possesses himself of Sicily, and Gualtiero becomes a wandering outlaw.

Gualtiero having in vain sought aid at the court of Arragon, turns pirate, and, during a space of ten years, carries on a desultory warfare against the party of Anjou. But his hopes of retrieving his fortunes, and of repossessing himself of Imogene, are equally frustrated; for the Duke of Caldora, having made her father prisoner, compels the daughter to consent to a union, with him, as the price of her parent's life.

In the meanwhile, Charles of Anjou determined to crush the pirates, has armed a powerful fleet, the command of which he confides to the Duke of Caldora. The two squadrons meet, and Gualtiero is defeated, and obliged to fly with a single vessel. He is shipwrecked by a storm on the coast of Sicily, not far from the castle of Caldora, in which the unhappy Imogene resides.

At this point the action of the drama commences. Gualtiero and his little crew are saved by some fishermen from a watery grave. He no sooner sets foot on shore, than Goffredo, (Signor Di'Angeli,) a hermit, who had formerly been his tutor, recognizes him, and informs him of the peril of his situation under the walls of his enemy's castle; without, however, satisfying his inquiries respecting the fate of Imogene. The latter, in the meanwhile, from motives of humanity, has hastened to the spot, to relieve the suffering strangers. Here an interesting scene takes place; Gualtiero recognizes his first love, and is struck with horror on hearing, from her own lips, that she is the wife of his most bitter enemy. Imogene endeavours to exculpate herself, and prevails on Gualtiero to avoid, for the present, the danger to be apprehended from discovery.

The Duke of Caldora, accompanied by his knights and warriors, now appears on the stage for the first time, and inquires into the circumstances of the shipwreck. Itulbo, (Signor Deville,) the companion of Gualtiero, in order to conceal the real state of the case, gives himself

out as the captain of the shipwrecked crew of a Genoese privateer. The Duke, not without some suspicion as to the truth of this story, declares them prisoners of war; but at the intercession of Imogene, consents to their being allowed to depart at break of day. This scene forms the finale of the first act, in which the poet has succeeded in producing considerable interest from the varied emotions of the several parties concerned. The second act presents few additional features; Itulbo in vain endeavours to press Gualtiero's speedy departure; the latter appears not only determined to obtain another interview with Imogene, but having in the meantime been joined by two vessels of his discomfited fleet, seems to meditate upon defiance to his enemy. The interview with Imogene takes place, she in vain urges him to fly; but in the midst of this tender scene, the Duke of Caldora surprises the lovers. Gualtiero now boldly discovers himself, and challenges the Duke to mortal combat; they retire, and Imogene, overcome by her feelings, sinks into the arms of her attendants.

The very next scene already exhibits the funeral obsequies of the Duke, who has fallen under the sword of his rival. Gualtiero appears in the midst of the knights who have denounced vengeance against the destroyer of their lord, and voluntarily surrenders himself. A council of knights is forthwith assembled for his trial; and whilst Imogene, in a state of delirium, gives utterance to the most wild and frenzied emotions, the sentence of condemnation pronounced by the council is proclaimed, and Imogene, in a bravura, accompanied by the chorus of her damsels, bewails her wretched destinies, whilst Gualtiero is seen led to execution across a bridge in the back of the scene.

On endeavouring to recall to our mind some general characteristic feature of the music of this opera, from an attentive observation of its progress, we feel more embarrassed than in any former attempt made under similar circumstances. The overture certainly has left no favourable impression; and with regard to the remainder of the music, we find ourselves in a labyrinth of indistinct recollections of scarcely a decisive character. Considering the youth of the author, the production is unquestionably meritorious, and highly promising as to the future; but there are few traces of originality. Not only the style and manner of Rossini are more or less perceptible throughout the work, but a variety of the ideas themselves appeared to us to be founded on Rossinian models, colored with accessory deviations which in some degree tend to disguise the prototypes. Morlacchi's "Tebaldo e Isolina" seems also to have furnished reminiscences.

Throughout the whole score, as in "Tebaldo e Isolina," the author's predilection for minor keys is as remarkable, as it proves, in our opinion, disadvantageous. The import of the poetry, we allow, is serious, and often mournful. But it is an

error to suppose that such feelings necessarily require the sombre colouring of the minor mood. Mozart and Rossini employ it but sparingly. Its prevalence creates anger and monotony, a term literally applicable; and however singular it may appear, the minor mood, imperfect as it is in some respects, and founded on a scale of imitation from the major, admits of less novelty of melodic invention. When we hear a *motivo* in a minor key, it almost always seems to us as if we had heard something like it before.

The chorusses, of which there are a considerable number, appeared to produce little effect. They seemed to us to want simplicity, breadth, and clearness. Their *tempi*, according to the fashion of the modern school, were generally of too active and hurried a description; not as regards execution, but no doubt so-intended by the composer. In the recitativos we observed nothing remarkable.

Although some few songs met with deserved applause, not one piece in the whole opera was called for a second time. Among those which seemed to excite a more marked attention, may be numbered: Donzelli's difficult air at the conclusion of the first scene, "*Per te di vane lagrime*," in which some originality prevails—the duet between that gentleman and Madame Lalande in the second scene, especially the passage at "*No maledirmi almeno*," a production of skilful workmanship—and, above all, a simple melodious cavatina of Donzelli in the third scene of the second act, "*Ma non sia sempre odiata la mia memoria*," one of the best pieces in the whole opera, well kept up and developed; though it also savours strongly of Rossini.

And now of Madame Meric Lalande! with regard to whose debut we feel as much embarrassment and diffidence as we experienced in speaking of the opera itself; considering the high terms of praise in which the theatrical critics for many years past have expressed themselves on the subject of this lady's talents, who has filled the station of prima donna at San Carlo, La Scala, and at several first-rate theatres on the Continent.

Madame Lalande, though likely to be for years to come an interesting artist, has unquestionably passed the culminating point of personal and vocal attraction. Her age does not seem to be less than forty; her features are not strongly marked; they have not the genial stamp of Southern origin, but they are regular and pleasing, and her exterior is altogether well-proportioned and lady-like. Madame Lalande's voice is a genuine soprano, of two full octaves up to C. The lower notes are sweet-toned and pleasing, and the upper scale is sufficiently powerful; but it is tremulous, quite similar to that of Madame Bonini, who sang a few seasons ago in the "*Crociato*;" and of a thin, wiry shrillness when forced to the higher notes. The intonation is unsteady, and was not always pure; she frequently sang too flat, a defect which may have been accidental.—Though the vocal style of Madame Lalande is not thoroughly Italian, it bespeaks a high degree of cultivation and matured experience. This

she abundantly evinced in the arduous part of Imogene, and especially in her first scene, which contains a bravura of great difficulty. As an actress, though Madame Lalande admits of no comparison with Pasta, and is not equal to Camporese, her personation of Imogene was interesting, and frequently highly impressive.

The success of this lady on our stage, to judge from the expression of the audience at the close of the opera, remains as yet undecided. She was not honored by any *encore*; and when, after a strong contest between the ayes and noes, she was led across the stage by Signor Donzelli, the tokens of applause were mingled with some marks of disapprobation. A farther trial or two will determine the question, and will, we are inclined to think, be attended with a more favourable result. This might, perhaps, have been the case even now, had the opera received better rehearsal, and had Madame Lalande assisted more in the rehearsals which did take place, so as to become more familiar with the other singers and the orchestra, and thus blend her individual efforts with those of her colleagues.

The part of Gualtiero owed much to Signor Donzelli's skill and exertions; the latter, indeed, as regards pulmonary strength, were often carried beyond the "modesty of nature." Signor Santini, who has but two or three scenes to appear in, fell far short of the dignity of a Sicilian Grandee; but, upon the whole, was respectable.

The manner in which the *materiel* of the opera was purveyed does much credit to the management. The costumes were characteristic, and even splendid; and the whole of the scenery is new, well designed and executed. The painting of the baronial castle of Caldora is picturesque; another view of it, by night, with illuminations, produced a striking effect; and the scene representing an inner court of the castle with bridge, and moving cascades in all directions, is grand and fanciful; though the directions of the poet as to the quantum of water to be dispensed, seem to have been acted upon on a very large scale. We might also add that the firing of guns by the vessel in distress, A. D., 1250, or so, is an anachronism.

This scene reminds us of the general incorrectness in the translation of the libretto. "*Atrio terreno nel castello*," for instance, is rendered, "*A subterranean passage in the castle!*" There are many similar mistakes, some of which are partially disguised by the freedom of a translation *in verse*. Sober, sensible, and correct prose, such as used to be dispensed formerly, would be infinitely preferable, and even afford a means of improvement in the Italian language.

POPULAR PREACHING.—It was said by Jeremy Taylor, in speaking of popular preachers of his day, that they entertained their hearers with "gaudy tulips and useless daffodils—and not with the bread of life and medicinal plants growing on the margin of the fountain of salvation."